



The Rev.^d JOHN CONDER D.D.

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A SERIOUS
ADDRESS

TO ALL
SOBER CHRISTIANS,
OF

EVERY DENOMINATION,

AMONGST

By John Conder

Protestant Dissenters;

Especially those of affluent Circumstances
in Town and Country,

ON THE
IMPORTANT SUBJECT
OF A
GOSPEL MINISTRY.

Wherein the GRAND QUALIFICATION for the
MINISTERIAL OFFICE is suggested,

AND

The NECESSITY of a more GENERAL CONCERN, and of
more EFFECTUAL MEASURES, for the suitable Supply of
our destitute Communities, is represented, with Earnestness
and Candour.

*Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might,
for there is no Work nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom,
in the Grave, whither thou goest. ECCLES. IX. 10.*

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THE GREAT BRITAIN

AND IRELAND

POST OFFICE

GENERAL

REGULATIONS

AND

ADDITIONAL

NOTICES

TO THE

POST OFFICE



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ensuing sheets are addressed to the several distinctions of Protestant Dissenters, not because the subject matter of them is unworthy the regard of all other sober Protestants throughout the land ; (happy would it be, if any measures could be taken for furnishing the established church with a clergy, qualified for the sacred function in the manner herein pleaded for) but because Dissenters have evidently a peculiar advantage above others, in the choice of their ministers, and in seeing to their qualifications for their work, have they but an hearty inclination to improve it ; and how great and incumbent the duty is, of so doing, 'tis a principal end of the present attempt to evince. The expedience of creeds and subscriptions to articles of faith, is here purposely waved, (as it is become so fashionable a thing to decry them, as shibboleths of a party) that I may have the candid and serious attention of both sides in that dispute ; whilst the grand test of ministerial fitness, is fixed on a basis, which all the real

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

friends of revelation, religion and reason, must (I think) agree to allow; and which alone, if duely attended to, will indeed in a great measure supersede the importance of all others.

I fear some apology may be thought necessary, that I take so great a freedom with my superiors, by insinuating there is so material a defect in our public proceedings; perhaps too, may incur the charge of impertinence, in pretending to advise to measures that are already professedly taken: but it can be no real cause of offence to such worthy friends of religion and the dissenting interest, as are actually embarked on so scriptural and rational a plan, to find the importance of it truly (tho' imperfectly) stated, the expedience of persevering in it with the utmost vigour and resolution, urged, the like measures earnestly recommended to universal consideration and regard, and all I hope in such a manner, as nothing but a disinterested compassion for the welfare of our Christian communities, and the revival of pure religion and undefiled, could inspire.

A S E R I O U S
A D D R E S S , &c.

Dear Countrymen and Fellow Christians,

AMONGST the numerous invaluable mercies, which the munificence of heaven has richly showered down on these unworthy nations, the gift and continuance of the gospel of the grace of God, has been for some ages past the crowning blessing: And amongst the many heightened and distinguishing privileges which we of the present age enjoy, the free exercise of religion, as every man's judgment and conscience direct him, must needs appear to every hearty Protestant, and particularly to every Protestant-dissenter, to be of the last importance. A privilege this, which our progenitors groaned under the want of,—which kind heaven had in reserve, to introduce with the glorious re-

volution, and to make a fresh grant and confirmation of, to us and our children, by the happy accession of the present illustrious family to the throne. The reformation should ever be dear to us as Christians ; the revolution as Protestants ; and the act of toleration as Dissenters.

Now as the interest of religion is *in itself* to the last degree important, and most rationally challenges our serious and devout regards, so, under such precious and peculiar indulgences of providence, it must, (beyond all doubt) be the bounden duty of every good man, according to his situation and ability, to exert himself in it's promotion and advancement. It can never be unreasonable and impertinent, seriously to attend to the state and prospect of religion, in the day we live ; carefully to remark any ill-boding aspects of things among us, diligently to investigate the particular sources of present declensions and decays, and to be casting in our thoughts the wisest and best methods of reclaiming or preventing what appears threatening and injurious, and of pursuing whatever may have a manifest tendency to promote the glory of the great God, and the everlasting felicity of precious immortal souls. He, that like *Gallio* can rest content, with *caring for none of these things*, as he is no friend to his own happiness, so he proclaims himself an enemy
to

to that of posterity. This indeed is an age of infidelity and profaneness, yet were the real friends of religion united together by the firm and intimate ties of primitive charity and zeal; was Christian union and harmony to possess the hearts of it's promoters, what sensible progress, what promising successes, might (with the divine blessing) be expected from their generous and well-conducted efforts, in favour of so great and good a cause! But there is too much evidence of truth, as well as keenness of satire, in an observation I have met with, that "most men have religion
 " enough to hate, but few have enough to
 " love one another." It is a melancholy sign of our times, that Christianity is crumbled into parties. Besides our several denominations (resulting from different external forms of worship, or the discipline and government of the Christian church) there is a far greater assemblage of party-distinctions amongst us, arising from mens differing opinions on many of the doctrines of divine revelation; the *minute*st of which distinctions, have often served too effectually, to render Fellow-christians and Protestants very great strangers, if not enemies, to each other. And really, from the smallest observation of the spirit and conduct of many professors of our holy religion, one would be tempted (tho' with the utmost reluctance) to conclude, that the main, if not

the only notion such have of Christianity is, that of a fond and bigotted attachment to some particular opinions, modes and forms, which the zealots of a favourite party have prescribed them; or what is yet worse, that of a perverse and prejudiced opposition to every well-meant motion and attempt, for the benefit of Christianity, which any other party, or number of pious Christians, may be embarked in the promotion of. With such, the most wise, rational, scriptural and well-conducted measures, for reviving the credit and influence of religion, are looked upon with coldness and indifference, if not discouraged with clamour and detraction.—Such, all such as these, whatever garb they wear, I would wholly (tho' with pity and compassion) detach from my thoughts, and dismiss from any immediate concern with the present matter of address; while I flatter myself with the hopes of finding a more candid hearing and unprejudiced reception, from the generality of my Christian readers, since the subject I am entering upon, is evidently of universal concernment, and of the greatest importance to the interests of Christianity amongst us, and while the plan I would pursue, is calculated with design to include and engage the *united*, or at least, *active* efforts of all wise and good men, all the friends of practical piety,

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of

of whatever denomination and distinction among us.

The weighty subject I would bespeak so general an attention to, is that of the *Christian Ministry*. An office so expressly instituted in the sacred writings—and of so evident standing use in the gospel church—so necessary to the spreading the joyful news of salvation in the world---so requisite for the maintenance of the scriptural and orderly worship of God in Christian congregations, that none who deserve the reputation of the Christian name, ever dreamt of denying it. Now as this sacred office itself is, in it's *nature* and *appointment*, so closely connected with the highest interests of mankind, it ought to be undertaken and executed by such, and such only, who are possessed of all the essential qualifications for so momentous a trust. This last assertion stands abundantly supported by scripture, reason, and matter of fact ; a pious and holy, a humble and zealous, a skilful and laborious ministry, has constantly proved the ornament and strength of the Christian cause ; while a profane and dissolute, an haughty and lukewarm, an ignorant and indolent clergy, ever have been, and ever will be, a dismal dead weight to the interest they profess themselves friends to, which has always declined, and too often expired under their hands ; so universally true is that prophetic

phetic adage, *Hof. iv. 9, Like people like priest.* It was to be wished this unpleasant remark had much fewer instances for it's support in the day we live.

It is very proper here to observe, that at the first propagation of the Christian faith, the most wise and gracious author of it, exerted his own miraculous power in *qualifying* and *furnishing* the primitive dispensers of it for their arduous work ; but after the Christian religion made its hasty and blessed progress in the world, this supernatural interposure of providence was at an end, and the provision for a ministerial succession has ever since devolved upon the Christian church : and in all succeeding ages, it has been the special care and concern of such as were *zealous for the truth upon earth*, to use their best endeavours in this matter, as they have had ability and opportunity ; the wise and sovereign king of the church having seen good thus to engage our constant cares, endeavours and industry, as the regular, and (for the most part) necessary means of his continuing the unspeakable mercy of a gospel preached. Thus every generation of wise and serious Christians are in fact constituted *trustees* for the succeeding ; and that in an affair of infinitely greater consequence, than the preservation of liberty, property, and every other secular and civil immunity. In this point of view

view my subject *bespeaks*, yea *claims* every reader's attention, not from curiosity, but duty; not as a stander-by, but a party concerned: and it is my sincere endeavour to awaken in the breasts of others, a conviction that has long possessed my own, *viz.* the necessity of our more *general* efforts, and the propriety of some *farther* and *more effectual* measures, in favour of the present and rising generation.

It is well known what gave the main rise to the dissenting interest in these lands. The cruel and impolitic exclusion of such a number of valuable ministers, from their parochial cures soon after the restoration. A set of men these, for their piety, learning and usefulness, that deserved much better usage than they met with; whose principles and practices make their names still venerable, and their examples, as Christians and Pastors, most worthy of our imitation.

It is very remarkable of these great and good men, that notwithstanding the great infelicities of the times, the almost unsupportable difficulties they encountered, in fulfilling their pastoral charge to their own separate congregations; yet they contented not themselves with labouring for their *present* good, but exerted themselves, what was in their power, in making provision for succeeding times. This they did *many* of them by
taking

taking a number of *religious* and *promising* youth under their tuition and direction ; by which means their churches were happily provided with a succession of able and worthy divines, as they themselves withdrew from off the stage of time. So great a sense had these worthies of the obligation they were under to *provide for the time to come* ; and herein did their prudent and well-conducted zeal diffuse it's generous influence on the generation then unborn.

Now altho' adorable providence has since that time more fully established our liberties, and enlarged our capacities of pursuing their so laudable and necessary plan ; tho' under the mild, the just, and auspicious government of the present royal house, several considerable funds have been raised, and large endowments and gifts have been made, professedly with this design ; yet it is notorious what a general complaint there is amongst us, of the want of ministers---what a number of congregations are destitute---and with what difficulty many have been of late supplied with such as have proved duly qualified for so important a service : and I must beg leave to add, that others, too many others, in one place or another, are under most visible decays of real and vital religion, through the unsuitableness and insufficiency of those that have

have been recommended to the ministry among them.

It has given me and others many a painful sensation to reflect upon this disagreeable assemblage of facts; some difficulty at first view to account for them; I ardently wish it may not prove a much greater to redress them. These facts are indeed sufficiently accounted for, by laying together three or four others. As

1. Tho' the Dissenters have full liberty to exert themselves in this matter, yet of late there has been but a small number of divines, whose *health, abilities, situation, leisure* and *inclination* have concurred to their taking upon them the additional fatigue and care of tutors. It is pity where other things concur, that *inclination* should be wanting to such an eminent service of our generation. Humility and modesty will indeed correct a criminal forwardness, but it is well if the love of ease, and abatement of zeal for the public good, must not in some cases have a little admittance into the account. But passing this.

2. The exceeding great *latitude in principles* which many of our young divines have of late years set out with, farther accounts for this matter. And by the latitude of principles which is here complained of, I would not be understood to mean every departure from

from generally received articles of the Christian faith, in less momentous and extra-essential matters, but that general disrelish and disuse of the several great doctrines of scripture and the reformation, which our judicious and pious forefathers maintained, to the hazard of their lives---which it is now become fashionable and polite to oppose, and run down, as enthusiastic, irrational and absurd. By such the sacred volume is respected only as a system of moral philosophy, and their pulpit performances are little else than ethnical harangues. Under such instructors, it is now no uncommon case to see, once large and flourishing congregations, languish and decline; Individuals dissatisfied and discouraged; 'till the most serious and understanding of them, wearied out with the intolerable defects of their present teachers, think themselves under a necessity of withdrawing, for better instruction, wherever it can be had: and where there is the assistance of *numbers*, or *friends*, the next step that is taken, is the setting up a separate interest and place for worship. Thus the community is divided, and being divided is weakened; commonly *so* weakened, that neither of the parties are any longer capable of affording a comfortable maintenance to their ministers, without an exhibition from the funds.---Thus by the continual swell of this kind of applications, it is to be feared the generous

nerous and wealthy citizens will at length grow weary of so burthensome a tax upon their liberality. But however this be, the want of ministers is in this way not a little increased.

3. A farther source of the churches present wants, is the *promiscuous admission* of such as offer themselves for academical instructions. At first sound, I may here seem to have forgot my argument, but a very little of the reader's thought will make it appear conclusive, and to the purpose. The end that is confessedly proposed, by assisting youth in a liberal education is, that our congregations may be supplied with an *able* and *useful* ministry ; that they may not only have a succession of teachers, but teachers *worth* their hearing ; such as are in a good degree possessed of all these qualifications, which are esteemed necessary, for a right discharge of that sacred undertaking. Now the greater and more immediate *wants* our public assemblies are in, the greater care is necessary, that none (if possible) might have academical pains and expences laid out on their education, who will disappoint the expectations of their tutors and encouragers, by turning out unqualified and unequal to the work. Every unmeet object takes up the room of a better ; and by this means the number is lessened, of *those*,
that

that can afterwards, with *credit* and *integrity*, be recommended to the churches.

This I am sensible is a very tender point, and therefore it is expedient that I add, how far I am from suggesting, that the reverend and worthy tutors and managers of our academies exercise *no care at all* in this affair. Recommendations are required, and examinations are made, as to the *capacities, characters* and *morals* of them they receive: but yet if it can be made appear that something *farther* than all this is *necessary* to be enquired after—that a much *greater care*, in the present state of things, is absolutely requisite—and that for want of this principally, if not entirely, our learned and worthy tutors have frequently had so little credit from their pupils, I hope to escape the censure of every candid mind, on this head, while I take the freedom to set it down as one cause of our present complaints.

But I hasten to the mention of one article more.

4. This melancholly fact is farther accounted for, by the large catalogue of ministers deaths, which a lustrum or two of years past presents us with; wherein the servants of Christ and religion have been remarkably called off from their work: not a few in their youthful prime; many others in the midst of their days and usefulness; and they too, who were em-

employing their eminent abilities in the most extensive service of the churches ; who were engaged, I mean, in the additional momentous labours of academical instruction : and as the lives of such are attended with a double labour, their deaths are a double loss, and their names and memories should be treated with a double respect.

The last year put a period to the life and labours of the learned and ingenious Dr. *Doddridge* of *Northampton* ; a gentleman, who as a preacher, a writer, and a tutor, gained as extensive popularity and reputation in the world, as usually falls to the share of a single person. More of the gentleman, the scholar, and the divine, according to all account, have seldom met together : yet had he, as a *tutor*, conducted himself more entirely according to the plan I would earnestly recommend in the following sheets, his usefulness had doubtless been far more extensive, and his learned and unwearied labours been crowned with a more general success : nor can I help flattering myself, that had he been favoured with a greater length of days, a proposal of this nature would have met with his very candid reception and serious regard ; I wish it may from those that survive and succeed him. The propriety of my taking this personal notice of the Doctor, will I hope

B fully

fully appear, as I address myself to the opening of my main design.

By these, and such like considerations then, the affecting *fact* is sufficiently accounted for. A scarcity of ministers is the complaint, applications on this account, are not a little numerous, and the pressing wants of the churches require a most serious regard. The great question therefore stands, "What method can be taken, what means can be used, which may with the *divine concurrence* be effectual to redress so weighty a grievance, and give the friends of religion, the pleasing prospect, that they, and their posterity shall yet be favour'd with that incomparable good, *viz.* a series of *pastors* after *God's own heart*, who shall feed them with *knowledge and understanding?*"

A very serious question this; and as, in its nature it *deserves*, so the circumstances of the times, most evidently *demand* a very serious answer: ---- an answer, which may not only appear rational and pertinent in the theory, but also practicable and effectual as a plan, for redressing the evil, and accomplishing the invaluable end proposed. And shou'd I, in the present attempt, be able to point out the *grand defect* in our present proceedings, and place what I have to advance in such a just and convincing point of view, as may engage

gage the reverend and worthy ministers and gentlemen, who have the management of our academies, in a due *attention* to it, and in an *active endeavour* after a general reformation in so momentous an article; it wou'd fill my soul with the most rational satisfaction, and revive the most pleasing expectations for the succeeding ages.

What hath been already mention'd as one particular spring of our present wants, I shall now single out as the *grand defect* of our present proceedings; namely, "Our receiving
 " and encouraging such youth, through a
 " course of academical studies as do not ap-
 " pear to be possessed of the most essential
 " qualifications for such encouragement."
 The office of the evangelical ministry is allowed on all hands, to be an important trust:
 " To assist in the employment and improve-
 " ment of our most sacred time; to go before,
 " and in a sort direct a worshipping assembly
 " how they shall spend the hours of social
 " worship," must needs appear a very solemn trust: they that undertake it, had need to be well qualified; any remarkable insufficiency in this case is the disadvantage and infelicity of numbers, and may end (I fear sometimes has so) in the ruin of whole societies. It might therefore be admitted as an enquiry very pertinent to the matter in hand, "What are

“ these qualifications for the sacred office,
 “ which are absolutely necessary in order to a
 “ right discharge of it ?” But to enter mi-
 nutely into particulars here, wou’d be to give
 out theses for disputation. It is sufficient for
 my design to observe ---- that the *ministry* is
 an office, not of *human* but *divine* appoint-
 ment. They that are therein employed, act
 under the commission of heaven, under the
 character of servants of the most High. It
 is reasonable, highly reasonable then to sup-
 pose, that the most *essential* qualifications for
 their work, come from the same hand, which
 their commissions do ; or at least that God has
 condescended to delineate the character of
 those whom his wisdom has designed for so
 arduous an employ. The sacred Scriptures
 most fully confirm these rational deductions.
 There we have their characters particularly
 given, their more necessary gifts and qualifica-
 tions distinctly specified, their special assist-
 ances and successes promised them from above,
 and the main stress evidently laid, where ac-
 cording to reason and the nature of the
 thing it must be laid, viz. in “ a minister’s
 “ personal *acquaintance with himself*, and the
 “ *concerns of his own immortal soul*, a sober
 “ *experience of the influence of these truths*,
 “ upon his own *heart and life*, which by his
 “ office he is engaged in dispensing to others.”

And

And farther, according to the whole tenour of the inspired writings, all the advantages of human erudition, all the attainments of polite literature, the utmost polish of the schools, are at most but *secondary* qualifications, which may have their use in a subordinate way, but are to be never raised in competition with those, which are alone the gift of Heaven. No particular citations are necessary in support of this account, to a reader who is at all conversant with his Bible.

I shall now therefore proceed, with advancing the following axioms; for as such I think they must be admitted by every sober and thinking mind.

First, Every *good man* is not qualified for a gospel-minister, but every gospel-minister must necessarily be a good man. ----- *Goodness* is the first, the fundamental, the most essential qualification for the ministry --- To demur here, is to brood the most flagrant absurdity --- It is to suppose him a fit guide of others in the ways of truth and holiness, that never trod the celestial path himself.

Secondly, He is a *good man* who answers to the scripture characteristics of a real Christian. The Heathen sages had a share of moral goodness. A real Christian is a Moralist --- but he is more; for

Thirdly, They, and they only are good Christians in scripture account, who are *partakers of the evangelical grace of regeneration*. Nothing is more evident to an attentive mind than this last assertion. And

Fourthly, It is then *preposterous* in itself very *dangerous* in its effect, to train up youth for the ministry, who by no rules of sober judging, answer to the scripture-test of private Christians. A proposition this which needs as little to be said in proof of its truth and justness, as any of the former: nor can I allow myself to soften the language of it, while I design it as a *detection* of matter of *fact* --- as a solemn *arraignment* of a threatening *defect* --- and as an earnest *persuasive* to the patrons of real and undissembled piety, to join in a calm, unprejudiced, and deliberate consideration of the reasonableness, and expediency of what I have thought so necessary to present to public view.

Here I shall crave my reader's patience while I open my main design in three distinct articles.

I. Make some brief enquiry into the scripture doctrine of regeneration, as it concerns all Christians.

II. Shew the importance of this Christian attainment, in order to the Ministry.

III. Take my leave with a serious and free address.

I. I am to make some brief enquiry, after the scripture-doctrine of regeneration, which it is highly expedient for me to do, while I mean to use it, as the sole and entire basis of the present argument. --- And an article of divine revelation this, which is by no means to be overlooked; when our blessed Lord and his holy apostles, throughout the new testament, uniformly lay it as the foundation, to the whole *practice of piety*. Who can cast his eye of attention on these sacred passages? *Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God* 1. --- *Marvel not that I say unto thee ye must be born again* 2. --- *For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works* 3. --- *According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost* 4. --- *Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth* 5, &c. --- and remain a sceptick in this matter? But what are we to understand by these and such like scripture terms, is the great question? Calvin and his followers have consider'd this as a fundamental and main article of the Christian faith, --- while others have laboured to reduce it to

1 John iii. 3. 2 Ver. 7. 3 Eph. ii. 10. 4 Tit. iii. 5.
5 James i. 18.

nothing more, than a partaking of the new testament rite of water-baptism ; which is as notoriously to blend and confound the *sign* with the *thing signified* in this ordinance, as the Romanists do in the other, by the monstrous absurdity of transubstantiation. I wou'd not however raise any painful apprehensions that I am going to produce the unfashionable *strictures* of a *thorough* Calvinist : It will answer my end and tally more directly with my purpose, to take my account wholly from such, as have distinguished themselves by the moderateness of their principles, the extensiveness of their charity, and their caution in conduct, not to incur the imputation of these disgustful terms, Bigottry and Enthusiasm. --- And here I at first proposed to avail myself wholly of the extensive character and popularity of the ingenious divine, whose decease has been regretted, in a former page. In his testamentary advice to his people, a set of discourses on the subject is recommended to their repeated perusal. * In the preface to that candid and serious performance, † I find a polite and affectionate recommendation of a tract on, “ *that being born again without which*

* See Mr. Job Orton's funeral discourse for Rev. Dr. Doddridge, page 39.

† Dr. Doddridge's 10 Sermons on Regeneration, Oct. pref. page 6.

"no man can be saved," by the late Doctor Samuel Wright of London. --- And in my perusal of that treatise, I form'd a farther resolution to consult what *Arminius* also had advanced in relation hereto : that so by the joint testimony of a moderate Calvinist, a very moderate Calvinist, and an avowed opposer of the Calvinian tenets, my reader might have a compleat evidence in its kind, that my argument stands grounded upon no party opinion, but on a received, incontestable scripture principle ; " one of the most vital truths of " Christianity."

The definition or general description of the subject is, " That regeneration is a prevailing " disposition of the soul to universal holiness, " produc'd and cherish'd by the influences of " God's *spirit* on our hearts, operating in a " manner suitable to the constitution of our " nature, as rational and accountable creatures." * This the Doctor lays down, as the uniform scriptural idea of regeneration. A description which is evidently couched under these soft'nings of language which he was celebrated for ; but it is sufficient with what he afterwards advances, fully to answer the ends of the present enquiry.

I. Regeneration is the effect of *divine agency*, " it is the operation of God's *spirit*

" on the heart, — a positive effect produced
 " by divine grace on the heart," &c. And
 after a very just preliminary, " that it is such
 " an agency of God, on our Minds, as of-
 " fers *no violence* to the rational and active
 " nature, which God has given us, nor does
 " by any means *superfede* our obligation to
 " those *duties* which his word requires," &c.
 He spends his seventh discourse in the direct
 proof of the reasonableness as well as absolute
 necessity of a *divine operation* in this great
 work.

Doctor Wright is no less express in this mo-
 mentous article: " To be *born again* is to
 " have something done in us and for us,
 " which cannot be done by us." *—" This,
 " (he observes) is beyond all doubt and con-
 " troversy the plain sense of scripture. Less
 " than this cannot be meant, by those many
 " high expressions: such as — being created
 " again in Christ Jesus — made new crea-
 " tures — raised to newness of life being
 " born again," &c. † He adds, " What-
 " ever false and ill consequences men may be
 " tempted to draw from hence, it *must* be
 " maintain'd that regeneration is the work of
 " the *Holy Spirit*, and that John i. 13. ex-
 " pressly denies any other agency in this mat-
 " ter." Hence therefore, says the Doctor,

* Page 237. † Page 7.

we may draw this conclusion; " That since
 " something is to be done in us, &c. we
 " shou'd be very earnest and unwearied in our
 " applications to God for his grace and
 " spirit." *

To this account of things the sentiments
 of *Arminius* may be with great propriety sub-
 join'd, as no less explicate on this head of
 scripture-doctrine --- Discourfing of man in his
 fall'n state, he tells us, " that of and from him-
 " self, he is able neither to think, nor will, nor
 " do, that which is truly good; but it is ne-
 " cessary that he be regenerated and renew'd
 " in his understanding, affections, will, and
 " all his powers by God, in Christ, thro' the
 " Holy Ghost, in order to his rightly under-
 " standing, esteeming, considering, willing,
 " and doing that which is truly good; but
 " he that is made a partaker of this regene-
 " ration or renovation, in my opinion, in as
 " much as he is freed from sin, is able to
 " think, will, and do that which is good,
 " yet not without the continual aids of the
 " grace of God. †

2. Regene-

* Page 8.

† In statu verò lapsus & peccati; ex seipso & à seipso quod
 quidem verè bonum est, neque cogitare, neque velle aut fa-
 cere posse, sed necesse esse ut à Deo in Christo per spiritum
 sanctum ipsius, regeneretur, & renovetur, in intellectu affecti-
 onibus five voluntate omnibusq; viribus; ad id quod vere
 bonum

2. Regeneration is the production of a disposition, a prevailing disposition in the soul after universal holiness: It is such divine agency as effects a change in the heart of a sinner, not merely in the life and conversation. Dr. D. tell us, “ when a man becomes
 “ a real Christian the whole temper and character of his mind is so *changed* as to become *different* from that of the generality
 “ of mankind, and *different* from what it formerly was, while in an unlightened
 “ unrenow’d state. It is not merely a little circumstantial alteration, it is not assuming
 “ a new name, professing new speculative opinions, or practising some new rites and
 “ forms: But it is becoming (as we frequently say in our usual forms of speech)
 “ a *different creature*, a *new man*, p. 36.

The Doctor farther illustrates this point at large throughout his 2d and 3d discourses, by expatiating upon the “ new apprehensions,
 “ new affections, new resolutions, new labours, new enjoyments, and new hopes” of such. “ That a regenerate soul has new ap-

bonum est rectè intelligendum estimandum, considerandum volendum & faciendum. Hujus vero regenerationis sive renovationis participem factum, statuo eum utpote liberatum à peccato posse bonum cogitare, velle, & facere, sed tamen non nisi cum auxilio semper gratiæ Dei. Armin. Oper. Theol. Edit. Francfort, 1631. Quarto, p. 98.

“ prehensions,

prehensions, of God ---- of itself ---- of Christ ---- of Eternity ---- and of the way and method which God has marked out for its being happy there." " That the affections of *love* and *aversion*, of desire and fear, of joy and sorrow," come all into this account, &c. p. 38 --- 98.

Here too Dr. Wright is very commendably open, explicite and instructive. " That which is done in us and for us when we are said to be born again, I take to be this ---- the *infusing* of some inward principle of life and action, to which we are naturally strangers ; and by communicating of which such a life begins as shall last for ever, p. 9. This principle of a new life I have said is *infused* into us, that it may be sought for and esteem'd, as something *supernatural*. It is not only an habit of the mind, but the spring and *cause* of every good, and gracious habit in us ; from hence probably a principle of grace is called the *root of the matter*, to signify to us (among other things) that it is really different from the soil in which it is planted : and that it is something brought to us by a divine hand, &c. p. 10. --- And if there be such an inward principle of life and action communicated in our regeneration it will follow -- that a mere outward change, and altering

" the

" the course of our lives is not sufficient to
 " a person's being born again --- that a civil
 " outward deportment may be maintain'd
 " where there is nothing of the power of re-
 " ligion at the heart, &c. p. 11. ---- And
 " agreeable hereto as to the grace of God ---
 " It is the *infusion* of all these gifts of the
 " Holy Ghost as well in the understanding, as
 " also in the will and affections of a man,
 " which appertain to his regeneration or re-
 " novation, such as *Faith, Hope, Charity, &c.*
 " without these gifts of grace, the man is not
 " sufficient to think, will, or do any thing
 " that is good." *

Thus much may be sufficient as to the na-
 ture and origen of this weighty matter ; and
 as it is very requisite I shou'd comprize the
 enquiry within the smallest compass of words
 I am able --- I shall only add farther on this
 head three or four propositions in the nature of
 deductions from the above representation, and
 they are certainly the best we can make of this
 great doctrine of the scriptures and the refor-
 mation.

* Quantum ad gratiam Dei : Credo 1) eam esse gratuitum
 affectum quo Deus bene affectus est erga miserum peccatorem,
 &c. 2) Eam esse *infusionem* omnium eorum donorum spiritus
 sancti, tam in intellectu quam in voluntate & affectibus homi-
 nis, quæ ad regenerationem & renovationem illius pertinent,
 ut sunt fides spes, charitas, &c. sine hisce donis graciæ ido-
 neum non esse hominem ut quidquam boni cogitet, velit, aut
 faciat. Armin. Oper. Theol. p. 98.

First,

First, Every regenerate man is a *convinced* man. One whose mind is truly awaken'd, to a serious and impressivè sense of spiritual things, the worth of his own immortal soul, and the importance of an interest in the favour of God, and those peculiar and saving blessings which flow from it; one whose stupidity and carelessness are alter'd into an affecting concern for his best Interest, the things that respect his everlasting peace and felicity.

"The soul that never seriously enquired into its spiritual state, is beyond all doubt an unregenerate soul." Dr. D. p. 11. "He that is not deeply convinced of his guilt before God, and desirous to seek deliverance from it by the Lord Jesus Christ, is still in an unregenerate state." p. 13. To be "unconcerned about the favour of God and communion with him," is laid down as a farther incontestible mark of unregeneracy, p. 15. --- Agreeable hereto we are taught, "that a truly convinced sinner is one who is inquisitive what course he can take to get out of his sinfull state and obtain an interest in the renewing and sanctifying grace of God --- and that this disposition of mind, fills the breast with the greatest anxiety, and employs his thoughts in restless contrivances and concern," &c. Dr. W. p. 50.

Arminius lays it down as a work of the Holy Ghost,

Ghost, preparatory to regeneration, “ whereby
 “ sinners are brought to acknowledge their
 “ sins, to be sorry for them, to desire deli-
 “ verance, and to seek after the deliverer
 “ when made known.” * ---- He therefore
 that remains an utter stranger to these things,
 has very slight pretences to make, in respect
 to the character of a real Christian.

Secondly, a regenerate man is a *true peni-
 tent*. This is most intimately and necessarily
 connected with the former. A serious and
 prevailing conviction of our sin and misery,
 is the immediate source of that repentance,
 remorse, and contrition of soul, which the
 scriptures speak so much to the nature and
 necessity of. One great end of a gospel mi-
 nistry we are assured is to *call sinners to re-
 pentance---to testify repentance towards God---*
 to be a means of inkindling in their hearts a
 sacred *sorrow* and *compunction* for their sins,
 a thorough *hatred* of them, and a sincere *re-
 solution* to forsake them----to this purpose sin-
 ners are directed “ to affect their souls, with
 “ a sense of their corruption of nature, and
 “ the many sins they have actually committed
 “ in their lives, that so by the operation of

* Hoc est eo quidem adducti sunt, ut peccata sua agnos-
 cant de iis doleant, liberationem desiderent & liberatorem
 monstratum quærant, attamen nondum illâ vi spiritus instructi
 sunt quâ caro mortificatur, &c. Armin. Op. p. 126.

“ the holy spirit, their passions of shame,
 “ fear, sorrow, hatred, may be sublimed
 “ into that saving grace of the Christian
 “ repentance unto life, not to be re-
 “ pented of.” Dr. W. p. 64, 65. --- The
 frame and temper of mind in a regenerate
 soul is farther represented to us, in
 soliloquy to this effect --- “ When thou
 “ thinkest of the spirituality and purity of
 “ his being and his law ; how shameful do
 “ thy temper and thy life appear to have
 “ been ! --- whom, oh my soul ! hast thou
 “ offended ? whose law hast thou broken ?
 “ &c. --- His, who sees, oh my heart ! all
 “ thy guilt and all its aggravations. Oh Lord,
 “ I *abhor myself*, and *repent in dust and*
 “ *ashes.*” Dr. D. p. 50.

Thirdly, A regenerate person is an *evangelical believer*. This is evidently another grand characteristic of a real Christian. Nothing do the holy scriptures mention as of leading influence in the Christian's life, more than his *faith* : It is *this* denominates the sinner's state : He that *believeth* on the son hath everlasting life. Now “ this great
 “ work of regeneration (we are assured)
 “ consists chiefly in our being brought to
 “ faith and repentance.” Dr. D. p. 226.
 Nothing can be more certain, from the whole tenor of revelation, than “ that he that be-
 C “ lieves

" lieves shall be saved, he that believes not,
 " shall be damned. And surely a state of
 " damnation is not a state of regeneration.
 " But what is this faith in Christ? Is it no
 " more than a bare notional persuasion that
 " he is the son of God? If this was all, the
 " *Devils* themselves believe ---- You cannot
 " then be ignorant that the faith to which
 " the promises of salvation are made, is a
 " faith which receives the Lord Jesus Christ
 " in all his offices; which trusts his attone-
 " ment as well as admits his revelation, and
 " flies to him for righteousness and life." &c.
 Dr. Dod. p. 14. --- It is also so pathetic a
 description of a gospel believer, which Dr.
 W. adopts, p. 67. that I cannot forbear an
 extract --- " My sins are many, my dangers
 " great, and my fears proportionable ----
 " what will become of me to all eternity
 " God only knows! there is indeed salva-
 " tion for lost sinners thro' the blood of a
 " crucified Jesus; but I have many discou-
 " ragements break in like wave after wave
 " on my distressed soul, and I have scarce
 " faith and hope enough to put up a prayer to
 " God: and yet I cannot forbear crying,
 " Lord be merciful to me a sinner! &c. ---
 " Well I must and will try what rich, so-
 " vereign, free grace, will do for me. ----
 " Who knows but he may stretch out the
 " scepter

scepter of his grace, and then I shall live. However live or die I'll betake myself to him: if ever help comes I know it must come this way," &c.

Let it be added to this important head that "evangelical faith is the assent of the mind produced by the holy spirit, by means of the gospel, in sinners, knowing their sins by the law, and repenting of them, by which they have both, a certain persuasion that Jesus Christ is constituted of God to be the author of salvation to them that obey him, and their's also, if they believe in him, and also do (actually) believe on him as such, and by him in God as a benevolent father in him, to the salvation of them that believe, and to the glory of Christ and God." * --- And that this faith on Christ belongs to the new creation, which is effected by Christ as he is mediator," &c. †

* Fides evangelica est adensus animi à spiritu sancto per evangelium, in peccatoribus & peccata per legem agnoscen-
tibus deque iisdem pœnitentibus productus, quo tum certo sibi
persuasum habent Jesum Christum à Deo constitutum esse au-
thorem salutis obtemperantibus ipsi, & suum quoque si in ip-
sum crediderint, tum in illum tanquam talem credunt, & per
eum in Deum tanquam patrem benevolum in ipso, ad salu-
tem credentium & gloriam Christi & Dei. Armin. Oper.
Theol. p. 313.

† Fides in Christum pertinet ad novam creationem qua
peragitur per Christum qua mediator est, &c. p. 129.

Fourthly, A regenerate man is a *real convert*. A convert to serious religion and true holiness. The least that can be said in description of this important point is, that it produces in the heart a *prevailing* disposition to universal holiness; this is the professed end of all religion; it is the real tendency of all scripture doctrines, and the genuine fruit of every evangelical grace and endowment. This is the grand test of the truth of a man's faith, the genuineness of his repentance, and sincerity of his Christian profession: It is therefore a true and serious deduction, "That no gift or attainment, how great and eminent soever they be will pass for this new birth, if there be not a new life. --- No pretended honouring the grace of God and a presumptuous confidence in it, whilst men go on in their sins, will by any means argue they are in a state of grace. Men's changing their opinions, or getting new notions in religion, will not prove that they are born again, if their lives and actions be not changed, so as to render them quite other persons than they were in their natural corrupt state," &c. Dr. W. p. 14, 15.

This is indeed so self-evident a point that there is not the least need of swelling quotations in its confirmation. --- And here may I safely

safely rest the evidence of my subject ; but as I have a passage before me (I think) remarkably express, and full to the main, of what has been advanced, I shall take the farther liberty to subjoin it to the account. It is on the subject of a sinner's vocation to Christ. Arminius's Works, Thesis 42. *

“ Vocation to the participation of Christ,
“ and his benefits, is the gracious act of

• *Vocatio ad communionem Christi & beneficiorum ejus est gratiosa actio Dei quâ homines peccatores reos condemnationis & sub dominio peccati constitutos, ex animalis vitæ conditione ex mundi hujus inquinamenti & corruptelis evocat, per verbum et spiritum suum ad vitam supernaturalem in Christo per pœnitentiam & fidem consequendam; ut in illo quasi capite suo à Deo destinato & ordinato uniti, et beneficiorum ejus communione frui queant ad gloriam Dei & ipsorum salutem, p. 310. ----- Materia vocationis sunt homines in animali vita constituti, mundani, naturales, animales, peccatores. Terminus à quo vocantur est status tum vitæ animalis tum peccati & miseriæ propter peccatum, &c. ----- Terminus ad quem est status gratiæ seu boni supernaturalis & omnis benedictionis spiritualis communicatio, quarum plenitudo in Christo capite est item potestas & vis quin et affectus communicandi. ---- Finis proximus vocationis est ut Deum & Christum ament timeant, honorent, colant, obedientiamque in justitia et sanctimonia veritatis juxta præscriptum verbi divini præstent vocanti Deo; & hac ratione firmam faciunt vocationem & electionem suam. ---- Istius verò obedientiæ partes universè tres constituuntur à Theologis. Prima est pœnitentia, vocatio enim est peccatorum ad justitiam: secunda est fides in Christum & in Deum per Christum, vocatio enim fit per evangelium quod est verbum fidei. Tertia est observatio mandatorum Dei in qua consistit sanctimonia vitæ, ad quam vocantur fideles et sine qua nemo videbit Deum, p. 311, 312.*

“ God, in which by his word and spirit he
 “ calls sinful men, obnoxious to condemna-
 “ tion, and under the dominion of sin ; from
 “ the condition of a natural life and the pol-
 “ lutions and contagions of this world : to
 “ the obtaining a *supernatural* life in Christ,
 “ thro’ repentance and faith ; that being *one*
 “ in him as in their head, fix’d and ordain’d
 “ of God, they might be able to participate
 “ of his benefits to the glory of God and
 “ their own salvation” ---- And in his farther
 explications --- “ the object of this vocation
 “ are sinful men called out of an estate of
 “ sin and misery, &c. ---- And the state to
 “ which they are called is a state of grace or
 “ supernatural good, and the participation
 “ of every spiritual blessing, of which
 “ there is a fulness in Christ the head, as
 “ also authority, and power, and disposition,
 “ no less, to bestow : --- that the immediate
 “ end of their vocation is, that they might
 “ love, fear, honour and worship God and
 “ Christ ; and yield obedience in righteous-
 “ ness, and true holiness, (according to
 “ prescription of the sacred word,) to him
 “ that calls them ; and in this way make
 “ their *calling* and *election* *sure*. He adds,
 “ that divines universally allow this obedi-
 “ dience to consist of three things. The
 “ first is repentance ; for it is the calling of
 “ sinners

“ sinners to righteousness. The second is
 “ faith, in Christ and in God thro’ Christ;
 “ for calling, is by the gospel, which is *the*
 “ *word of faith*. The third is the ob-
 “ servance of the commands of God, in
 “ which the sanctity of life consists, to
 “ which believers are called, and without
 “ which no man shall see God.” Nothing
 is needed more clear and expressive, than
 these several testimonies given, by which the
 candid attender to them will be under a ne-
 cessity of allowing, that the doctrine of re-
 generation is not to be *overlooked* as the
 speculative opinion or favourite dogma of a
 party, but in very deed and truth, one of
 those most necessary and momentous princi-
 ples of *pure revelation* which the adorable
 God has mercifully reveal’d for the benefit
 of sinners ---- confessed and allowed to be a
 scripture doctrine by Arminius as well as
 Calvin, by the moderate, as well as them
 who think it right to adhere more *closely* to
 the Calvinian scheme. I cannot therefore
 possibly conclude this head of enquiry better
 than in the words of the Reverend Doctor
 Wright. “ Could I now speak with a
 “ voice, that should reach the whole world,
 “ I would proclaim it ---- that whatever
 “ nation men are of, or whatever party
 C 4 “ they

" they belong to, and whatever their figure
 " or characters may be here on earth,
 " *Except they be born again, they shall never*
 " *see the kingdom of God.* It is at thy peril,
 " man ! whoever thou art, that hearest or
 " readest these words, if thou darest to
 " shew a disgust, or even a disregard to
 " them. This text stands in thy bible as
 " with an hand pointing to it ; and a
 " double seal [*verily verily*] set upon it,
 " that declares it one of the unalterable
 " edicts of heaven. Let the profaneness
 " of the world or the *vain religion* of
 " the world, suggest what they will, if
 " thou art not *born again* thou art not in a
 " state of salvation," p. 26.

Such is the account which these reverend
 and learned divines have given us of this
 great, this *radical* principle of vital and prac-
 tical piety-----and I have promised in the
 next place

II. To subjoin to this enquiry, *some re-*
presentation of the *importance* of this Chri-
 stian *attainment*, in order to any man's en-
 tering on the ministerial function.

This is indeed so self-evident a matter from
 the very nature and reason of things, as well
 as from the spirit that breaths thro' the sacred
 oracles,

oracles, that it may seem wholly needless, that I shou'd address myself to the formalities of a proof,-----but as it is so very interesting an affair to the whole church of God, and is, what the generality of protestants, even protestant dissenters of this age, seem too much to need the being awaken'd to a sense of; I am greatly desirous, of having the *force* of the argument familiar, to the most common capacities; and therefore shall take the liberty of a few small strictures, which may serve to throw a sufficiency of light upon it, without too great a weariness of the candid readers attention.---

“ No one is fit for a minister of the gospel, that is not a real Christian” or, the *grace of God* is the leading and most essential qualification for that most sacred office and employment. A proposition this, which a very superficial and concise view of things will yield abundant evidence in the support of. An evangelical pastor-----he is a commissioner of heaven----intrusted with the care of souls.-----A preacher of righteousness-----and of the way, the only way, which eternal wisdom and grace has ordain'd for the everlasting salvation of sinful men-----but what kind of guidance in the paths of life, can a number of inquisitive
souls

souls expect, from one who has never seriously enquired the way for himself! ---- How will righteousness be preached by one, that is an entire stranger to the practise of it; at best a stranger to the main motives and springs of such practise? ----- What care can he be supposed to take of the souls of others, who has never had any prevailing sense of the value and preciousness of his own? ----- In fine, what commission can he be conceived to have possibly had from heaven, who is a stranger, an enemy to the God of heaven; a stranger to forgiveness, and an enemy to sanctity? But let the thought a little expand itself by an induction of a few particulars.---

I. The ministerial work consists in *preaching the gospel of God*. In *speaking forth the words of truth and soberness*; a great part of this heavenly commission is couch'd in that short and single phrase, *preach the word*. A minister is not at liberty to preach " what he will " in the delivery of his message; nothing is to be advanced as gospel, which he does not find warrant for, in the sacred volume. No ambassador of state is obliged to adhere so strictly to his instructions, no council at the bar to his brief; as a minister of Christ shou'd adhere to his bible. For a people then to be entertain'd with a course of
unscrip-

unscriptural conjectures and opinions, fine speculative reasonings, and philosophical declamations, is for them, to be *trifled* with instead of *taught* and *starved*, instead of *strengthen'd*, in the paths of virtue and religion. But what is the grand security against a serious body of Christians, being thus imposed on? Nothing, but a pious, a skilful, a conscientious, that is a *converted* ministry. That piety and conscientiousness, which are the effects of regenerating grace, will command a man's mind, unto a reverential regard of the doctrines that are really scriptural, and form his conduct, by a *canon* we are certain is apostolical. "Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so call'd, which some professing have erred from the faith." 1 Tim. vi. 20.

The *ends* too of this celestial commission are as sublime, as the message itself is precious, the great point of the evangelical compass which the Christian pilot shou'd ever steer by, is "that he so preach as to be instrumental of *saving* himself and them that hear him." To awaken and convince the secure, to excite the convinced, to a deep and genuine repentance; to open the door of faith, and hope, to the real penitent;

tent; to relieve the weary, and heavy-laden, in their enquiries after rest; to welcome the returning prodigal; as also to build up the gospel convert, in his most holy faith; and to encourage, and strengthen his hands, in the paths of purity, in his way to heaven; are so many important points, which the skill, industry, and zeal, of the preacher, shou'd be invariably directed by. But how vague, how superficial and incompetent will the assistences of that teacher be, who is personally ignorant, and unacquainted with these divine effects, of the gospel, on his own heart! and whose own ignorance tempts him to *neglect*, the most serious exercises of the Christians mind, if not to *brand* them, with the fashionable reproaches of weakness and enthusiasm! a very little reflection will serve to evince, how good, and how expedient a thing it is, *that the heart be established with grace.*

2. Another material branch of the ministerial work is, that of "being the tongue of the congregation in their united addresses at *the throne of grace.*" The liberty of free and unprescribed prayer in public worship, was, with our pious and venerable ancestors, an article of the greatest moment, and one very considerable reason of their dissent

dissent from the public and establish'd forms;
 and it is no small stress our separate congregations have ever since laid, on this branch of Christian liberty. The suffrage of scripture and common sense is evidently on our side herein, and the long and continued experience of the most sensible and devout amongst us, confirms the valuableness of this part of our religious privileges. A man's skill and capacity then, to express his own, and his peoples humble and earnest requests before God, in a distinct, pertinent, full, favourable, and devout manner, has always been looked upon as a ministerial *gift* of the first magnitude; and I am persuaded will be so, as long as serious and real religion prevails in our Christian assemblies: But it is the *spirit of grace*, that is a *spirit of supplication*. Zech. 12. 10. The grace of God in the heart, is of main influence, in this part of our high and heavenly calling, to express the various exercises of a religious mind---to represent the numerous doubts, difficulties and fears; the inward conflicts, burthens, sorrows and distresses, with their special sources and strength----to set forth, the particular wants and weaknesses, oppositions and discouragements, which the Christian feels----to solicit the divine aids and assistances, supplies and

and supports in such manner, and from such evangelical topics, as are suited to excite the Christians faith and holy affections---to particularize also the great subjects of his consolation and joy; the standing and more occasional springs, of his encouragement, thankfulness and praise---is an article of ministerial ability which cannot be derived from the science of the schools. What then of this sort can the churches expect, from an unconverted ministry! a melancholly insufficiency and defect, is soon discovered by the most intelligent part of our communities, who return from the house of prayer, disappointed, disgusted and discouraged; instead of being edified, cheer'd and refresh'd. Nor can I recollect any one thing that is more radically prejudicial to the dissenting interest, than the growing formality of this part of our public services: the rising generation being by degrees wholly used to the cold, languid, formal prayers, of such teachers, the transition is very easy, from a more private to an establish'd *form* when our separation from the establishment appears so little more than a nominal distinction.

3. It is no less expedient, that I mention the general tenor of a ministers behaviour and deportment, both in the church and in the world.

world. Holy Writ is remarkably express, on both these topicks; and they are of vast importance to the well-being of particular societies, as well as to the credit of our holy profession in general.

In the church, the Christian pastor has a variety of duties, besides the work of the pulpit. He is a *shepherd*: and therefore under more than human ties, *to take heed to himself and all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made him an overseer.* Acts 20. 28. There are the poor and necessitous, the sick and afflicted; there are also the tempted, and those of sorrowful spirit, who need much of his prayers, sympathy and advice: besides his general attendance to the state of his flock and charge, without which he will be very little able to preach to their spiritual profit and advantage.

He is a *steward* ---- moreover it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful. 1 Cor. 4. 2. And in what a number of instances is the greatest ministerial faithfulness required! not only in dispensing the *mysteries of God*, in *rightly dividing the word of truth*, but in *reproving, rebuking, exhorting*, with all *long-suffering and doctrine*; not respecting the *person of the poor, nor honouring the person of the mighty*, so as in any case to suffer
sin

sin to be upon him, *not doing any thing by partiality*, or *preferring one before another*, &c. In fine, he is a *servant*, the term minister bespeaks it, a servant of Christ, and of the church of God, for Christ's sake: and *the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves.* 2 Tim. 2. 24. And what with the weakness of some, and rough tempers of others the Christian labourer finds a sufficiency of exercise for all these graces. Thus the scriptures teach. What a despicable figure then, must that minister certainly exhibit, who is devoid of a principle of love to religion and the souls of men! who feels nothing of "that prevailing disposition of the soul to universal holiness, which is produced and cherished by the influences of God's spirit"! To such an one, all grave and religious converse is a painful burthen; visiting of the sick and afflicted, is a gloomy task----and his forced attention to the sorrows and complaints of awaken'd and afflicted consciences is a distasteful drudgery, which he will be sure (what in him lies) to avoid. In a word, what faithfulness and impartiality, what forbearance and self-denial, or what tenderness for the *peace of Zion*

tion when any difficulties arise, can be rationally expected, from a man who has *self-love* for his governing principle, and whose personal reputation and authority, nay, his caprice and humour are dearer to him by far, than the peace and prosperity of the Church of God !

In the World too, as well as in the Church, the conduct of a gospel-minister is of the greatest significance. It is expected both by God and man that his behaviour be more than merely moral : The divine injunction runs : “ *Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works ; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.* ” I Tim. iv. 12. ---

Tit. ii. 7. Such a sincerity, solidity, and gravity, are highly requisite in the whole of his deportment, as may evidence him to be a man for another world, and that his heart is set upon promoting serious and vital godliness all the ways he can. How sad and melancholy is it then, to see so many, that wear this sacred character, putting themselves at the head of parties of pleasure, taking delight in the fashionable diversions, amusements and gayeties of life ; and there-

D

by,

by, too plainly proclaiming that they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. What friendly eye, without a flood of tears? what parent's eye, without a bleeding heart, can look upon our lovely blooming youth, embolden'd by the example of their guides, and specious names of *innocent diversions*, rush eagerly and far above controul, on the most hazardous, bewitching, fatal snares!

" It is no wonder (adds a late grave and
 " worthy divine) if young persons shou'd be
 " fond of such teachers *now*; because they
 " *prophecy smooth things*, such as are suitable
 " to their *inclinations* and *gay tempers*: but
 " it is well if many have not cause to curse
 " them to all eternity." Rev. Dr. O'Hughes
 ord. ser. for Jollie, &c. p. 34.

Thus then I rest the evidence of this point, " that *those* who *preach* to others
 " should be *thorough* Christians themselves."
 And I correct myself for pursuing it so far as I have, when it has been so frequently inculcated both from the pulpit and the press, in a much better manner than is now pretended to. One performance of this sort I shall take freedom to mention, as it comes from a quarter, we have been less used to expect them. And such a spirit of truly Christian seriousness and good-sense breath's

breath's thro' the whole, as seems to indicate the reverend author to be a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven. A sermon preach'd at Plymouth, at the archdeacon's visitation, June 1, 1750, by Thomas Vivian, vicar of Cornwood. ----

I shall take my leave therefore of this part of my subject, with annexing the sentiments of that ingenious and eminent divine, the reverend Dr. William Bates his works, fol. p. 841. ---- " Sincere godliness and true holiness is the *divine* part of a minister, without which, all other accomplishments, are not likely to be effectual for the great end of the ministry, that is, to translate sinners out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son. Conversion is the special work of divine grace, and it is most likely, that God will use those as instruments in that blessed work who are dear to him, and earnestly desire to glorify him. ---- Let a minister be master of natural and artificial eloquence, let him understand all the secret springs of persuasion, let him be furnished with learning and knowledge, yet he is not likely to succeed in his divine employment without sanctifying grace. It is *that* gives him a tender sense of the

"worth of souls, that warms his heart
 "with ardent requests to God, and with
 "zealous affections to men, for their salva-
 "tion. Besides, an unholy minister un-
 "ravels in his actions his most accurate dis-
 "courses in the pulpit, and like a carbuncle
 "that seems animated with the light and
 "heat of fire, but is a cold dead stone; so
 "tho' with appearing earnestness he may
 "urge men's duties upon them, yet he is
 "cold and careless in his own practice, and
 "his example enervates the efficacy of his
 "sermons."

By this time I persuade myself it suffici-
 ently appears ---- "That regeneration is a
 "religious reality; not a matter of specula-
 "tion, but a *matter of fact* --- that this
 "heavenly grace is fundamental to all ge-
 "nuine and practical Religion --- that this
 "Christian attainment is the most essential
 "qualification for ministerial work --- and
 "therefore, that it is abundantly evident to
 "the most common capacity, that none but
 "such as are thus divinely qualify'd, ought
 "in *christian conscience* or *prudence*, to be
 "admitted into our seminaries of learning,
 "and assisted in their studies for so sacred
 "an undertaking."

know "

And

And do the inspired writings, the united suffrage of ingenious and eminent divines, and the *nature of the thing too*, all conspire to remove the least hesitation from the mind, and fix these things as indubitable verities upon us? How loudly then, Christian friends and fellow Protestants, are we called upon to give our most serious and active attentions to them? Are we obliged to own the principles, or to dispense with the dictates of our bibles, and common sense? Is the evidence so plain and cogent, as to leave an irresistible conviction upon us? We have then assuredly the only warrantable, and truly Christian plan before us, on which the whole of our religious conduct and measures shou'd be form'd; as ever we propose *real service* to our generation, the advancement of piety, the thanks of our fellow Christians, and the commendation and blessing of the most High on our endeavours.

May our *wills* in this case follow the last dictates of our understandings indeed! and the several parties amongst us be prevail'd upon to form their general cares and conduct for the public good, upon so scriptural, so rational, and so solid a basis as this common principle of Christianity is!

With the chearful hope, of being heard with candour and indulgence, I proceed as I at first proposed —

III. To take my leave with a serious, free, and particular address; and

First, To our reverend and worthy gentlemen and fathers, who are employing their superior talents and abilities as tutors, in our schools of erudition. Your labours are great, and your pains expensive to your time, strength, and spirits; but you have this to animate you, amidst all your fatigues; that you are spending yourselves in the best of causes; you are serving your God and your generation, in one of the most elevated spheres of life: and in a faithful and diligent discharge of your duty, you may chearfully expect the most profound esteem of all good men, the peculiar countenance and aids of heaven now, and a most ample and exuberant reward of grace at the end of your toils.

But permit me, gentlemen, withal to remind you, “ That your undertaking is a “ most *solemn and weighty trust*.” If every Christian pastor is a steward, in the particular family of grace over which Providence has placed him, ye are stewards at large; and if great faithfulness is necessary in all such,
much

much more so in you ; the result of all their studies and pains, is the service of a few hundreds ; but the studies and pains of a tutor, when rightly conducted, issue in the benefit of (it may be) as many communities. Give me leave therefore to assure ye, that the eyes of our congregations are upon you, and that our destitute assemblies have their expectations of a suitable supply centring in your labours. And would you have the satisfaction of seeing your seminaries of learning, nurseries of serious piety ? wou'd you be animated in the course of your academical labours, with the pleasing thought, that you are assisting the studies, and forming the minds of those, who will prove eminent for religion, learning, and usefulness in their day ? wou'd you have your grave, judicious and labour'd compendiums of Christian theology attended to, digested, relished, and cordially received ; in that humble, modest, inquisitive and sedulous manner, which becomes the disciples and students of so heavenly a science ? In a word, wou'd you have peace in your own minds, love and gratitude from your pupils, veneration and thanks from the Churches, see ripe fruits of your industry, reap credit by your pains, and what is more than all, have the grand commendation at last,

“ Well done, good and faithful servants ?
 “ form the truly Christian resolution, and
 “ determine by the grace of God to abide
 “ by it, never knowingly to admit any youth
 “ (with this view) under your tuition, but
 “ such as *truly fear God*, such, who, upon
 “ your sober judgment as Christians and di-
 “ vines, you can conscientiously conclude
 “ are really *born again*.” Without this,
 there is certainly an error at the foundation,
 and all the skill and application of the most
 judicious and accomplish’d instructors will,
 as to the *main end* be labour lost, or at best,
 of most dubious and uncertain effect. Your
 eminent talents and acquirements, and a lau-
 dable zeal of being extensively useful, have
 entitled you to the confidence of the body of
 Dissenters; but what shou’d we think of the
 most skilful and ingenious lapidary, was he
 to expend his time, and exquisite art, indis-
 criminately, on the precious jewel, and the
 common pebble ? or what establish’d repu-
 tation cou’d the architect expect, who is able
 indeed to erect the most beautiful and just
 proportion’d fabric, but was notorious, for
 neglecting his foundation, or the quality of
 its materials ? I am very sensible, gentle-
 men, in the present state of things, you have
 your difficulties to encounter --- Every man
 has

has his particular friends to oblige --- a large number of pupils is lucrative and reputable, --- and to incur the imputation of rigidity and want of charity, is worst of all. --- But what profession or useful employment are there not difficulties in? If there were none, there wou'd be no trial of that Christian virtue *Faithfulness*. ---- Every ingenuous and grateful mind, wou'd willingly oblige his friend, but he no way deserves that sacred title, who insists upon a man's violating his conscience to please him; nor do we, I believe, often find, that a friendship so purchased is worth the possession. The primitive teachers of truth had an answer ready in all such cases: *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than God, judge ye.* Acts iv. 19.

There is a pleasure, and may be some worldly advantage in a large number of students; but he that has no higher end than his own *vanity* or *gain*, in such an undertaking, is very unworthy of the confidence and credit of it. However I am not persuading you to lessen your numbers, rather may they be abundantly increased! but may it be only with such as appear duly, *i. e.* divinely qualified for it. ---- Numbers, in this case, will reflect a lustre on their tutors, and agreeably

agreeably answer the expectations and necessities of the church of God. — Charity is a truly Christian virtue, a grace of most amiable and extensive influence on the temper and conduct of its happy possessors. The sacred text raises it to the highest place in the Christian character, and at the same time describes it in its genuine and heavenly form : *It believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things* — and we have the same infallible assurance that, *it doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own — rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* — But,

Aurea ne credas, quæcunque nitescere cernis,

The most valuable gem may have its counterfeit, and egregious failings may wear the names of shining virtues. That fond inordinate self-love, which prefers a self-applause and personal ease before all the cause of God and religion ; that cold indifference to the religious principles and practices, which were so dear to our pious ancestors ; — that affected philanthropy which blinds the eye of distinction, between the precious and the vile, the virtuous and the vain ; which tempts us to admit men as *good Christians*, at
the

the expence of our scripture-knowledge, our integrity and even our senses, can never be allow'd a place in this account. That is the truest charity to ourselves and to others, which engages us to that discharge of our respective duties, which we can reflect upon with pleasure on a dying pillow, and which will embalm our memories with the wise and good, when time, as to us, shall be no more.

I am free, gentlemen, in urging this matter upon you, purely from a persuasion, that you will find your accounts in it, and our Christian communities will reap the advantage. In fervent charity, I commend you to the favour, the aids, and the blessing of him, who has said, " Be thou faithful " unto death, and I will give thee a crown " of life."

Secondly, To you, reverend and worthy gentlemen, the managers and supporters of our several dissenting seminaries. Give me leave to observe; You are no less concern'd in the serious subject I am upon. Your thoughts and your cares are employ'd in the most noble, most honourable, and truly Christian design; without a provision of this nature, numbers of our congregations must have dispersed for want of instructors; your ge-
nerous

nerous and unwearied concern for the public good intitle you therefore to the most grateful esteem, *throughout all the churches.*

Indulge me with the freedom of addressing you, as *principals* in this affair; to you is intrusted the right application both of the annual liberalities of the living, and the generous bequests of the dead. The greatest part of those that are educated for the ministry, are proposed to your approbation and encouragement; and it is in virtue of your credentials and recommendation, that our young candidates are invited into the pulpits of our destitute assemblies; and many of them are so highly opinionated in favour of a minister who comes thus recommended, that I fear in some instances, they have proceeded to too hasty a settlement of him amongst them. How great, how sacred a necessity then, is laid upon you, gentlemen, to see *thoroughly* to the furniture, divine, and human, which they are possess'd of, who are thus recommended! my single plea is, that it be sufficiently seen to, that they are Christians, and that it be seen to *in time*, so that a fruitless expence may be prevented, as well as the subsequent infelicity of an unconverted ministry avoided. The gentleman and the scholar are inviting characters; but they

they are the mere shell of a gospel-minister without the *Christian*. Is conversion a reality? is there in fact such a divine effect of the gospel on the hearts of individuals? and is it one great end of a gospel preach'd, thus to convert sinners from the error of their ways, into the paths of undissembled faith and purity? Surely then it is no matter of indifference; surely it must be a momentous point of *conscience*, with all that fear the most high God, strictly to adhere to this one principle in all proceedings and conduct of this nature! It must be a most dangerous oversight and neglect; for any to suffer themselves knowingly to depart from it. What does it favour of less than presumption to attempt the qualifying them to bear office in the church, whom the king of Zion has not qualified for a private station therein? Suppose our rightful sovereign on the throne, was to issue out a commission to his old experienced generals, whereby they were intrusted with the care of educating a number of youth, who were to be commission'd officers in the royal army or fleet; and in the execution of this their trust they were to be quite indifferent, whether the youth they received were loyal to their prince, or arrant rebels and enemies, in their heart,

heart against him, what shou'd we think of the fidelity of such commissioners? what painful apprehensions wou'd seize every truly British heart, at so imminent and apparent danger of his country's safety? for what cou'd in this case be expected in time of war, but that our forces and our fleets, those bulwarks of the land, wou'd betray their trust and revolt to the enemy? Wou'd it not be thought of the greatest importance to our king and country, that such a commission shou'd take pains in being assured of their pupils' loyalty, as well as in well-grounding them in the principles of the military art? The application is easy---I am however aware it may be here objected, " That the
 " qualification in hand is of a spiritual, a
 " refined, and therefore of a less obvious
 " nature, that the greatest divine may be
 " mistaken in his judgment of the state of a
 " man's heart." --- The heart is indeed a secret thing locked up from human eyes, and it is the prerogative of Heaven alone to search it: Nor is it required of you, gentlemen, either by God or man, that you shou'd be infallible, yet it is required of every steward, that he be found faithful; and a man of integrity, whatever trust he takes upon him, engages to act to the *best*
of

of his knowledge and judgment : This, but nothing more than this, is required in the present case ; I wou'd be far from urging to any censorious, uncharitable, and unchristian temper or proceedings. But where there is not an *affectation* of ignorance, we may be kind, and yet conscientious ; charitable, and yet faithful ; not censorious, yet for the most part sufficiently determin'd in our judgment, whether the examinant be a fit object of our care and encouragement or not. The tree is certainly known by its fruit, so is the serious Christian by his profession and conduct. Where there is an ingenuous frankness of heart, attended with humility, modesty, and inquisitiveness after knowledge, together with a prevailing seriousness of spirit, and apparent conscientiousness, evidently influencing the general temper and deportment ; such a youth, it is certain, is easily to be distinguished, from the son of petulance and pride, ignorance and self-conceit, levity, vanity, or profaneness !

It may be farther given in plea, “ That
 “ tho' a youth does not appear fraught with
 “ a real principle of piety at his admission,
 “ yet before he has finish'd his studies, he
 “ may have a better sense of things.” This
 is

is possible, and may have been the case; but it is at least as possible, and I fear much more frequently the case, that such a youth by this time is to be found at the head of a party of his fellow-students, who pride themselves with despising the most judicious lectures of their tutors, have learnt sufficiently to discountenance all sober and scriptural opinions with the witty sneer of Orthodoxy, and all religious practices of those that have a better sense of things, with the fashionable stigma of Cant and Enthusiasm: And how promising a prospect our destitute assemblies have of a suitable supply by gentlemen of this cast, needs no great sagacity to determine.

What has been observed as a real difficulty on our tutors, recurs as a matter that no less affects you, gentlemen, that are managers and supporters of our academies; "You have
 " your respective friends to oblige --- your
 " friends to recommend; and there is no re-
 " fusing a recommendation when applications
 " are personally made, without giving the
 " greatest offence by such a refusal." But will not a little prudence and resolution, sufficiently obviate this difficulty, and make the matter very easy, both to the tutor and yourselves? Indulge me, while I mention a
 few

few particulars that occur to present thought; which your superior and deliberate judgment might with ease ripen into a plan of the most extensive service.

Might it not be laid down as a rule never to be departed from, that the tutor never admit any into the number of his pupils upon his own private opinion of fitness; but refer all that offer themselves to him, to your united examination and judgment? This will remove a considerable branch of a conscientious tutor's cares, which every wise and modest man will be gladly relieved in.

On the same account

No candidate shou'd be admitted upon the examination and recommendation of the gentleman that proposes him, but let there always be a committee form'd, of a sufficient number, who shall be allow'd to examine him, together and apart, with that care and conscientiousness which the importance of the business requires --- And might there not, with the greatest propriety be a method taken, of knowing the ultimate opinion of the examiners, while the particular sentiments of each individual are concealed, and his admission, or refusal, be thus invariably determin'd, by the vote of the majority. A proceeding of this sort can never be held
E contemptible,

contemptible, while so valuable an end as the harmony of society, is so evidently promoted by it. — Again,

Is it not in the nature of the thing highly expedient, that besides the care taken at their admission, our youth should be subject to annual, or more frequent examinations, by a committee for that purpose, so long as they are in their studies? Youth stand in need of a continued oversight, and a greater than the tutor alone can exercise, especially at an age when most are apt to think they need not any; which makes a frequency of those committees for examination to be the more absolutely necessary. In all which three things I humbly conceive should be attended to, in a *more* than superficial way, besides that, of their proficiency in human literature. One is, what the religious principles are, which they imbibe: Another is, what of the serious Christian they maintain, while they are professedly forming into the scholar and the divine: And a third, what is the tenor of their deportment and behaviour in the family and abroad. Youth are prone to be flighty when they are from under the inspection of their superiors, and the mere student, whose heart is devoid of a principle of piety, is as extravagant in his recreations,

recreations, his *folly* approaches as near to *madness*, as can be well equall'd throughout the rational creation. But may the day never dawn wherein a youth of so viciated and depraved a taste, shall find admittance into any of our dissenting seminaries, or be countenanced and continued when once discovered ! Yet instances of this kind must be expected amongst us, if we are superficial in our enquiries after every thing but their learning, especially when they have been admitted, without the *one thing needful*.

I think but of one thing more which deserves the name of an objection, and that is, the seeming hardship and uncharitableness of denying a youth education for the ministry, that expresses a strong inclination for that arduous and honourable employment :” But is it not the truest charity, to divert a person’s mind from an undertaking he appears intirely unsuitable for ? to divert a fond, but ill-grounded inclination in time, *i. e.* while he has time before him, for gaining the knowledge of some useful art, or profession, wherein he may be of considerable service in his generation ? Besides, is not this unbounded charity to individuals, the greatest cruelty to whole communities ? Who are the wolves in sheep’s clothing, that

the wise and compassionate Jesus cautions his disciples against, but ambitious, worldly-minded and graceless pretenders and intruders into the ministerial office? and can the avowed and most active friends of Christ and the churches allow themselves, upon any pretence whatever, to be instrumental of sending such amongst them?

---Quis talia fando temperet à lacrymis?

Yet farther, if it is so great an hardship to exercise this faithfulness to a youth at his admission, what must it be, to desert him when he has finished his studies? the reputation of his tutor, the humanity and compassion of those that have been his friends hitherto, and his present unfitness to enter upon any other calling in life, seem to unite their earnest pleas in his favour. Some provision must be made for him, some recommendation must be given him, but where, and what? --- without the most cruel and uncharitable imposition upon some credulous, injudicious, passive community or other. ----- May integrity and uprightness preserve us! Has it not the most sensible effect, even upon the animal frame, to view this gloomy piece of *picturesque*? For charity

city sake, gentlemen, necessitate such youth to make a timely choice, of some secular employment; in charity to our reverend tutors screen them from the discredit of such pupils; in charity to our country congregations, expose them not to the infelicity and mischief of such incompetent instructors: and in charity to yourselves determine resolutely so to act in this affair, as to keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and man, and that you may reflect upon the whole of your management with an unmixed religious pleasure.

Thirdly, It is expedient that in the next place I apply myself to all our religious communities throughout the land. It is for your service that the reverend and worthy gentlemen I have been with a well-meant freedom addressing, are employing their respective cares, expences, and pains; for your sakes they are laying themselves out in this laudable and important way. But it is the common cause of religion that I am pleading, and wou'd therefore with the greatest earnestness bespeak the common and zealous attention of all that have its sacred interests at heart; and in an affair of so extensive a nature, nothing less than this will be adequate to your present and future ex-
E 3
gencies,

gencies. Thanks be to God, that even in this thoughtless, lifeless day, there are some public spirits to be found, some worthy ministers and gentlemen amongst us, especially in the metropolis of the nation, who are still animated with the truly Christian ambition of seeking the good of our British Israel, who are blessed with a prudent and pious forethought, and are persevering in such wise and well-conducted measures, as have been crown'd in many instances, with the desired success; but how unreasonable is it that an expence and trouble of this kind, shou'd entirely devolve upon the hands and hearts of a few individuals? What obligations are these honourable patrons of religion and learning under more than others? If *they* are thus piously serving their generation *by the will of God*, are not the sacred ties as great upon *others* to do the like? And indeed how preposterous is it to expect that their most active and generous endeavours, can ever be sufficient to supply the church's necessities, throughout the nation? It is found in fact they are not sufficient; our *desitute* assemblies are many, (as it hath been already observ'd) and yet the bulk of our Christian societies rest as indolent and insensible of this branch of duty and discretion

as if the father of mercies had promised to provide for them by miracle, and had nowhere connected the prudent and active use of means with the attainment of the end. But has not his consummate wisdom done so, in this, and every other case? What then is this less, than a most criminal neglect, a sinning against our own and our children's prosperity! Suffer yourselves therefore, Fellow-Christians, to be awaken'd to a due sense of so material and immediate a duty. How highly expedient, how absolutely necessary is it that every congregation in city and country, shou'd look upon themselves, as parties concern'd, and that every individual Christian, in his sphere, shou'd be adding his mite for the general good. The obligation is evidently universal, while there is not a Christian assembly amongst us, that is at present most suitably and happily supplied, can assure themselves of the continuance of the instrument of their prosperity; the sovereign arbiter of life may soon leave them as sheep without a shepherd; many such awful instances of his hand have of late years been upon us! And wou'd not one and all, upon the demise of their present able and faithful instructors willingly have their places supplied with such as will

walk in their steps? It is our invaluable privilege, as Dissenters, to have the free choice of our spiritual guides, but the privilege subsides, where no candidates are ready, that are worthy our choice. Things are already at such a pass with us, that in instances not a few, our congregations have been necessitated to take up with such as they cou'd *obtain*, rather than such as in their judgment they can cordially *approve*. And how shou'd it be otherwise, while there is not the least foresight exercised, the least measure taken, the least concern shew'd about a future supply, 'till their pressing necessities are such, that they must disperse without one. This is a very sober and affecting truth, and one of the sad and striking proofs, that we are retired many degrees backward from the wisdom and zeal of our forefathers.

I am aware of the trite and trivial plea, that our country communities are so small, and the substantial among them so few, that it is not without considerable difficulty they can comfortably provide for their present teachers, without being at any additional expences on this or any other account.-----

I make no difficulty of admitting this, in many instances to be true; but it is no less so,

that some hundreds of our congregations in large towns and populous villages are as well capacitated to support their ministers, and exert themselves liberally on other occasions too, as many are in the metropolis itself; and there are indeed but few Christian societies, but what have some individuals among them, who had they inclinations answerable to their abilities, wou'd make no difficulty of an handsom contribution once in the year at least, to so good, so great, and so interesting a design. And I can't help flattering myself, that a great number of able and well disposed Christians, that now look upon themselves as little concern'd with an affair of this nature as the inhabitants of the Indies, upon a proper and thorough representation, and personal application made on this account, might be easily induced, readily and cheerfully to promote so necessary and good a work.----If the present essay is a means of exciting ministers and others to a becoming activity in this respect, and of preparing such sincere and well disposed friends of religion, to a friendly reception of such applications, one considerable part of my present pains will be agreeably answer'd. ----And I am animated with the pleasing hope to which I join most ardent prayers to
the

the most high, that it will not be altogether a labour in vain.

I shall only add, that the smallest and poorest of our churches may greatly contribute to the general good; as it is not merely (nor perhaps chiefly) the augmentation of our funds that is requisite, but a greater number of *suitable* objects for admission to academical instruction; there is some enquiry, some strict and close enquiry necessary, after a sufficient number of sensible, sober, modest and truly pious youth, such as appear sensible of the nature and importance of what they are undertaking, such whose hearts appear season'd with the grace of God, whose inclinations and views seem directed in truth, by a zeal for his glory, and the good of immortal souls; whose highest ambition is to be good themselves, and to be instruments of making others so; such as will make conscience of bending their studies in the pursuit of solid and useful literature, because they wou'd be serviceable in after life.---And such are to be found most frequently in the lowest stations of life, and among those communities which are least able to assist them: but by the contributions of the opulent and good, which I have been soliciting our public exhibitions might be extended

extended beyond the present ordinary and limited limits, as the destitute circumstances of a candidate may require: and by this means a difficulty which has (as to many) been insuperable, might be easily obviated, and a way made for the classical and academical learning of such as however promising in themselves for seriousness and good sense, have been obliged to suppress their warm and pious desires of the ministry, meerly because their parents and friends have not been capable of answering the extra-charges which wou'd have attended their years of tuition. But leaving this, and all other *particular measures* to the prudence and care of the churches: what I wou'd leave warm upon my readers heart are “ the pressing
 “ wants of our religious communities ----
 “ the absolute necessity of more general efforts and more effectual measures for
 “ their supply ---- the expediency of educating a greater number of studious youth
 “ for the sacred employment ---- and the
 “ need there is of the generous contributions of such as are able, to so good a
 “ design ---- and as the matter of greatest
 “ consequence of all; that the utmost care
 “ be taken in respect to the leading qualifications of all those, that are encouraged
 “ in

“ in their preparations for so momentous a
 “ service ---- and I hope it has been made
 “ with some evidence to appear, that the
 “ special season of exercising this important
 “ care is at the *admission* of our youth into
 “ our seminaries of academical education ---
 “ that this is the critical season, when it is
 “ chiefly in the power of conscientious tu-
 “ tors and managers to prevent the disqua-
 “ lified from intruding into the sacred of-
 “ fice: ---- and that the enquiring out, and
 “ recommending such as deserve encou-
 “ ragement challenge the general cares of
 “ the churches of Christ.” ---- And was I
 skill’d in all the arts of just and powerful
 persuasion; was I master of the most for-
 cible eloquence, had I the tongue or pen
 of an angel, to urge and fix a general at-
 tention to these things, the nature and im-
 portance of the subject wou’d richly de-
 serve them: But humbly conscious of a
 total incapacity for any thing of this kind,
 I must leave this plain and artless represen-
 tation of matters to the serious considera-
 tion and judicious improvement of the
 wise and good, and close this feeble, well-
 meant essay, with my most fervent prayers,
 that the God of all power and goodness,
 may awaken the present generation of
 professors

professors to a suitable sense of both their privileges and duties ---- that in the course of his adorable and good providence, such may be raised up to take the sacred office upon them as he will bless, and make the happy instruments of turning many to righteousness, and of answering all the other ends of his wisdom and grace in the world. ---- That he will please to accept and succeed this humble attempt for the promotion of religion and the prosperity of the churches; and it will yield an unspeakable satisfaction to one, whose intire design, throughout the whole, has been to approve himself to the public as an honest and well-meaning Christian.

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